

A CARAVEL OF DREAMS

LILA MUNRO TAITER





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A Caravel of Dreams

A BOOK OF VERSE

BY

LILA MUNRO TAINTER

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TO
MY HUSBAND
AND
MY MOTHER

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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LILA MUNRO TAINTER

San Diego,
California.

FOREWORD

O ship o' dreams, fashioned from foam of waves,
Bird songs and whisperings of leafy boughs,
The footfall of the rain upon the roof,
The grief and joy of man, the flower of dawn,
The tender grace of twilight on the sea;
Molded by the desire of the heart,
And armored in a strength invincible,
Made in the furnace of the soul's white flame,—
Go swiftly over seas to my beloved,
Bearing within thy hold a precious freight
Of memories' fragrant spices. Fear no ill;
The pilot, Love, will guide thee to the feet
Of her who made our earth a paradise.

CONTENTS

POEMS OF LOVE

	PAGE
YOUNG LOVE IS DEAD	1
LOVE, THE SORCERER	2
LOVE'S PRISONER	3
WHEN BIRDS SING LOW	4
TO EROS	5
LOVE'S FIRST DREAM	7
WHERE THOU DOST PASS	8
THE DÉBUTANTE	9
ONCE MORE	10
FORGIVE	12
OH, COME TO ME	13
THE CAPTIVE	14
LOVE'S APPROACH	15
SKETCHES	16
THE TRYST	18
THE ARTIST	19

POEMS OF FANCY

SLEEP	23
THE DOWER	24
SHIPS	25
THE ARGONAUTS	26
THE QUEST	29
ASPIRATION	31
TO ARCADY	32
DEPARTED YEARS	33
FIELDS OF SLEEP	34

	PAGE
THE ROCK-A-BY SHIP	35
WHEN PAN PLAYS	37

POEMS OF REVERY

A CHRISTMAS TOAST	41
RETROSPECTION	43
THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY	44
THE DULLARD	45
REAPERS	46
A QUESTION	47
FOR SUCCESS	48
EXPECTATION	49
THE CARAVELS	51

POEMS OF NATURE

A SLEIGHING SONG	55
EVENING	56
THE NECROMANCER	57
HOURS	59
THE SURF DOGS	61
THE SEAGULLS	62
INDIAN SUMMER	63
PERSEPHONE	64
REGINA	65
THE DESERT	67
AT LA JOLLA	69
NEWPORT HARBOR	70
BY THE PACIFIC	71
O BIRD, SWIFT FLYING	72
THE RETURN	73

POEMS OF SORROW

	PAGE
IN A GARDEN	77
RESIGNATION	79
MY PEARL	81
AT NIGHT	82
IN HOSPITAL AT MANILA	83
HOPE'S MESSENGER	85
MY SONG	86
GOOD-BYE, OLD YEAR	87
FINIS	89
DREAMS	90
PASS ON, O DEATH	91
TURN DOWN HIS EMPTY GLASS	92

POEMS OF TRAGEDY

ANARCHY	97
SISTERS	99
BETRAYED	101
THE WANTON	103
RACHEL	104
THE JESTER	105
CONDEMNED	106
PAYING THE PIPER	107
THE LAND OF WOE	108
THE OPEN GATE	109
VANQUISHED	111

RELIGIOUS POEMS

THE CROSS OF RUBIDOUX	115
THE WORSHIP OF THE FLOWERS	117

	PAGE
EASTER TIME	118
CHRIST'S MOTHER	119
BETHLEHEM'S BABE	120
I AM A WANDERER	122
WHEN SHEPHERDS WATCHED	123
YULETIDE	125
<i>Cui Bono</i>	126

POEMS OF LOVE

YOUNG LOVE IS DEAD

YOUNG Love is dead,
But when he died we cannot tell;
There was no sound of passing bell
When life had fled.

We did not know
A thing so fair could pass away,
That lips of fire could turn one day
To lips of snow.

In dumb despair
We gazed on him we had caressed;
His hands were folded on his breast
As if in prayer.

Then in the grave
We laid our Love so cold and still.
We could not weep; we had no will
Or power to save.

The Spring is here
With smiling face, but Love has fled;
Where last year's flowers are lying dead,
Go seek his bier.

LOVE, THE SORCERER

Love is a sorcerer of wondrous power ;
He holds the glass of time within his hand,
And, lo, for one ecstatic, happy hour
The sun of heart's desire at his command
Floods all the land !

Love is the harbinger of bitter pain,
Of vain regret, of tears and wild despair,—
A harvest, garnered 'mid the winds and rain,
Of blighted hopes and memories once fair.
Of Love beware !

And yet whene'er we hear his thrilling voice,—
Whether in perfumed Spring we list his
speech,
Or when bird choirs of Summer sing, " Re-
joice "—
With outstretched arms we strive his arms to
reach,
And gifts beseech !

Love, the beginning and the end of all,
Molds even the changeless to his own behest,
And gives to those who, living, miss his call,
In death the sacred shelter of his breast ;
And this is best !

LOVE'S PRISONER

THOU art Love's prisoner who once roamed free
And mocked his chains;
Henceforward at his pleasure thou shalt be
As he ordains.

Thy bosom white is his, thy dark eyes' fire;
Thy nectared lips
Are his alone to drain at his desire
In honeyed sips.

He marked thee for his own; and by his art
And subtle charms
He seized and prisoned thee within his heart,
Bound by his arms.

WHEN BIRDS SING LOW

RONDEAU

WHEN birds sing low in green retreat
At midnight hour their love songs sweet,
The popped arms of Sleep forsake
For mine, Sweetheart. Awake! Awake!
Oh, let me not in vain entreat
When birds sing low.

Soon o'er the hills her lord to greet
Will glide the Dawn on shining feet:
Haste, from thy limbs dreams' fetters shake
When birds sing low.

The night with mysteries is replete,
And for love's tryst alone is meet;
Then come to me ere morn doth break,
With fragrant lips my thirst to slake
When birds sing low.

TO EROS

O FAIR god Eros, on this summer day
 Pause in thy flight,
And 'mid the fragrant blossoms let us stray
 Before the Night
Shrouds in her dusky veil the saffron light.

The tawny bees sing low the while they poise
 O'er each sweet lip,
And fan the ardor of their coming joys
 Before they sip,
Then,—into waiting nectared cups they dip.

List, I entreat thee! Lay thy weapons by
 A while, and rest
Ere thou dost wing thy course adown the sky;
 I fain would test
My strength 'gainst thine. Come, dream upon
 my breast!

Thou canst not wound me, Eros; I am old,
 And thou must keep
Thine arrows for hearts not grown numb and
 cold:
 An ashen heap
Long since was mine, with all its story told.

—Nay, threat me not, I fear no more thy
 charms!

 —But, ah, thy breath,—
Thy soft lips, wake again the old alarms;—

 —Though this be death,
'Tis welcome thus to meet it in thine arms.

LOVE'S FIRST DREAM

WHEN yesterday
Has faded in the far horizon dim,
And fair to-morrow o'er the mountain's rim
Peeps arch and gay,
Will aught remind thee of our old-time bliss,
The rapture of the first ecstatic kiss?

Or doth stern fate
Decree that it shall be recalled no more,
As footprints made upon a sandy shore
That waves obliterate;
And all the charm, the passion and sweet pain
Of love's first message never come again?

It cannot be
That midst the joys with which thy life is
fraught,
The past so bitter-sweet holds not a thought,
A memory of me;
That I, who kindled first the altar's flame,
Shall have nor habitation nor a name?

Let love's first dream
Sometimes glide through the cloisters of thy
heart,
And I shall know, though time and seas may
part;
Nor will it seem
A sin to have been loved, though at the shrine
Another hand now feeds the fire divine.

WHERE THOU DOST PASS

WHERE thou dost pass,
The chaliced lily fairer grows,
And sweeter breathes the fragrant rose;
The whole wide world in beauty blooms and
glows
Where thou dost pass.

O little queen,
O dainty, royal lady fair,
Our prisoner wonderful and rare,
Caught on the wing, trapped in a moonbeam
snare,
O little queen.

Wilt thou not stay
A few short hours thine upward flight,
And be content till jewelled night
Dies on the threshold of the morning bright
Wilt thou not stay?

Thy captor, Love,
Folds thee from harms upon his breast;
Then struggle not, but quiet rest,—
A timid bird safe in a sheltered nest;
Thy captor, Love.

THE DÉBUTANTE

SHE comes, a vision to enchant,—

Dark, tangled lashes veil her eyes,
Filled with a sweet, demure surprise;
A rosebud fair, a débutante.

The chestnut rings anear her cheek

Touch lovingly the tinted snows;
Chased by her smile a dimple goes
About her mouth at hide-and-seek.

Ah, could I feel that little hand

With rose-tipped fingers clasp mine own,
The proudest monarch on his throne
Would rank as beggar in the land.

Fair maid, to me sweet succor give,

Nor let my heart unheeded lie
Beneath thy light feet tripping by,
But heal my wounds and bid me live.

ONCE MORE

WHEN the Summer comes once more,
 O my love,
Shall I see you as of yore,
 O my love;
With heaven's radiance shining through
Overarching skies of blue
In a benison on you,
 O my love?

Will you smile on me again,
 Heart of mine,
And forgive the tears and pain,
 Heart of mine,
And forget doubt's drifting snows
In the glory of the rose,
While love's rapture burns and glows,
 Heart of mine?

Hasten to mine empty arms,
 My beloved;
I will shelter you from harms,
 My beloved.
You shall lie upon my breast
In an ecstasy of rest,
Safe as bird within its nest,
 My beloved.

In that distant country fair,
O mine own,
You must know my wild despair,
O mine own;
And from out eternity,
By love's wondrous potency,
You will come from God to me,
O mine own!

FORGIVE

AMID the shadows dark
That close enfold,
Above the ruins stark
Of hopes grown cold,
Send but one token, dear, that I may live;
Forgive.

Beyond the mountain ridge
So darkly blue,
Across yon starry bridge
My prayers pursue
Who couldst no boon refuse when thou didst
live;
Forgive.

By pangs of vain remorse,
By anguished cry,
By haunted orbs whose source
Of tears is dry,
Remember not the old-time perfidy; that I may
live,
Forgive.

Adown the black abyss
Whence thee I call,
From thine estate of bliss
Let pardon fall;
Whisper to me one word that I may live;
Forgive.

OH, COME TO ME

RONDEL

OH, come to me; the twilight shadows grey,
 Veil with their dusky wings the golden west,
Where slowly fades the flower of the day,
 Its petals floating on the ocean's breast.
While birds sing sweet good-night in bowered
 nest

Amid the trees whose branches swing and sway,
Oh, come to me; the twilight shadows grey,
 Veil with their dusky wings the golden west.

Thy lips are sweet as blossoms of the May,
 Thy bosom white as snow on mountain's
 crest.

Across the fields of evening take thy way,
 And with thy gentle voice soothe my unrest;
Oh, come to me; the evening shadows grey,
 Veil with their dusky wings the golden west.

THE CAPTIVE

WHY does Love weave such fetters for my
feet;

O heart's delight, I should be far away;
Hark, through the casement sounds the world's
heart-beat,
The echo of its fray.

Open thy gates and set me free again;
Thy tangling lashes hold me captive still;
And thus I kneel, filled with delicious pain,
A suppliant at thy will.

The blossom of thy mouth invites approach,
Its garnered sweetness I would fain surprise,
But should I on its petals fair encroach,
Wouldst slay me with thine eyes?

Have pity, beauteous lady; bid me live;
Grant me some hope ere I from thee depart;
If guerdon for sweet duress I must give,
Maiden, I leave my heart.

LOVE'S APPROACH

MINE own, my dear,
Love has set forth upon his gentle quest;
Open thy portals for the coming guest
Without a fear.

Swift from the skies,
O'er hill and stream he straightway wings his
flight,
His path illumined ever by the light
Within thine eyes.

Thy bosom's shrine
Shall be to him a sanctuary sweet;
After the din and turmoil of the street,
Refuge divine.

True love ne'er tires
Seeking his own; as magnet unto steel
He flies, and shall abide through woe or weal,—
E'en through sin's fires.

He asks not gain
Of his beloved, nor if his gift exceed;
He cometh to fulfill each wish and need,
And soothe all pain.

From Heaven above
He brings the crown of all the joys to be,
Conqueror of death, heir of eternity,
Immortal Love.

SKETCHES

I

THE God of Day comes forth with his young
bride —

Fair Morn, enshrouded in her silvery mists;
With eager hand he sweeps her veil aside,
And blushing yields she whatso'er he lists.
The waterfall leaps down from craggy lair,
And with its rainbow glories decks her hair.

The swallows dart from hidden nests, and fly
In myriads over meadow, barn and croft;
Far, far above the tallest treetops high,
The message of the morning bear aloft;
The river sings betwixt its sedgy banks,
And reeds and grasses wave in serried ranks.

II

The ardent Sun above Earth's fragrant breast
Broods with his wide-spread wings of flame
a-glow;
And golden plumage, falling from his crest,
Quivers and gleams upon the tide below.
A languorous peace pervades, begot from this
Embrace of Earth and Sun in cloud abyss.

The insects' drowsy drone the only sound
That breaks the quiet of the noontide grace,

The bees within the lily's cup have found
Sweet recompense of labor for a space;
The dusky shades withdraw to forest maze,
Nor stirring leaf their ambush safe betrays.

III

Night o'er her head a star-gemmed wimple
flings,

And swiftly glides adown the darkening skies;
Between her palms the lantern moon she swings
As to the trysting-place of Love she hies;
Glowing with ardor, filled with sweet alarms,
Eager she seeks the rapture of his arms.

The wandering wind, espying her in flight,
With view halloo, upon the chase has sped,
But ere Dawn's archers with their shafts of
light

Rise to the hunt, the wanton queen has fled;
Yet little zephyrs whispering, disclose
The secret amour to the blushing rose.

THE TRYST

THE perfume of roses fills the air;
The lily in green coif, tall and fair,
Amid the shadows that grow apace,
Stands like a nun with pure, pale face.

The herald stars with their torches bright
Proclaim in the skies the coming Night;
Her dusky mantle is sweeping chill
O'er swaying trees and on distant hill.

The firefly lights up his lantern small;
The mournful voices of crickets call;
The wings of the winds bring odors sweet;
But never sound of thy coming feet.

A dreaming bird calls from hidden nest;
The moon sails over the mountain's crest;
The brown owl summons his mate unseen
Far in the depths of the woodland green.

Why dost thou tarry? The hours wane.
Must Love's fond pleading be made in vain?
My lips are thirsting for thy lips dear,
— Moon of delight,— she is here, she is
here.

THE ARTIST

THOU art a daughter of the house of song,
Whose golden corridors, the hours long,
 Are echoing
With unborn harmonies that dulcet ring.

Within thy lovely bosom, 'neath its snows,
A spark from God's own altar burns and glows;
 Its flame divine
Draws all the ravished world and makes it
 thine.

Such rapture does thy wondrous music wake
That souls in ecstasy their bonds would break,
 And, from earth free,
Soar up to heaven on wings of melody.

POEMS OF FANCY

SLEEP

RONDEL

SLEEP wanders slowly down night's golden
stair,

Wearing a dream-flower on her snowy breast.
In rippling splendor flows her unbound hair,
Her eyes in heavenly benediction rest
Upon the unquiet world and it is blest.
Repose profound attends all nature where
Sleep wanders slowly down night's golden stair,
Wearing a dream-flower on her snowy breast.

Peace enters weary hearts, abiding there
For a brief space, and at her sweet behest,
Tears flow no more, forgotten is despair,
As, with hushed footfall, on her gentle quest,
Sleep wanders slowly down night's golden stair.

THE DOWER

HIDDEN 'mid interlacing vines of green
That o'er the rough stone boulders climb and
clinging,
There is a little gate almost unseen,
And birds about its portals nest and sing.

A tiny gate, but broad and wondrous fair
The landscape that beyond it stretches wide,
With flowering fields whose perfume fills the
air,
And shady groves where woodland things
abide.

Dryads from every tree and shrub invite
To dalliance in shady, cool retreat,
And humming birds in every bloom alight,
Nor know at last which sip has been most
sweet.

Spirit of beauty, wonderful thy dower;
Without such gift how barren life would be!
The miracle of bush and tree and flower
Thou givest those who love thee, eyes to see.

SHIPS

Out of the shadows grey
That hang in misty veil,
A little fleet sets sail
From port of Yesterday.

With white wings to the breeze,
Their high prows spurn the foam,
And swiftly onward come
To bring back memories.

From far-off southern skies
Where sun-kissed rivers flow;
From northland, white with snow,
Whence cloud-capped peaks arise;

Into the Present glide
The phantom ships of Yore,
Sweep into port once more,
And safe at anchor ride.

And when the sun sinks low,
Strange music ebbs and swells
Like chime of elfin bells,—
The songs of Long Ago.

THE ARGONAUTS

WE are sailing, we are sailing, and our quest
shall never cease

Till in Hesperidean gardens we behold the
golden fleece.

Passing glimpses of its splendor seemed to reach
us in the morn

When above the waste of waters came the rosy
day new-born,

But, alas, no land was lying, green and lovely,
on our lee,

And as far as eye could follow stretched the
restless, moaning sea.

We are sailing, we are sailing, beyond any
mortal hailing,

Till we see on far horizon those fair islands
of delight.

When the golden flower of heaven opened wide
to glorify

The tree of night whose branches stretched
across the arching sky,

And the silver stars were blossoming in myriads
on each bough,

We thought our quest was ended and our guer-
don given now.

Oh, the agony of waiting; oh, the hope deferred
so long,

That may only voice its yearning in the measure of a song.

We are sailing, we are sailing.

Eyes once keen are dulled with gazing on the far-off misty rim

For a glimpse of that fair kingdom in the offing, pale and dim;

And the crew, so gay and fearless, now are greybeards sad and old,

With their courage crushed and broken and their fiery hearts grown cold;

Joyous hopes and aspirations, all have faded till they seem

Like the evanescent phantoms of some half-forgotten dream.

We are sailing, we are sailing.

We have journeyed long and widely, and our ship in port would be;

She is heavy with the trailing weeds of many an unknown sea;

Every sail is brown and tattered; all her timbers leaking sore.

She has buffeted the typhoon, heard the sirens on the shore;

Bare her deck and swept by surges; guiding helm unshipped and gone;

She is but a wreck dismantled and the treasure still unwon.

We are sailing, we are sailing, beyond any
mortal hailing;

Oh, to see on the horizon those fair islands
of delight!

To the eastward or the westward is the king-
dom that we seek?

Not one ship has ever reached it of the many
we bespeak;

But we know beyond all doubting, by our an-
guish of desire,

By the unrest that consumes us with the tor-
ment of its fire,

That the agony of loving and the heartbreaks
were not vain,

And that in the port we're seeking there is
surcease for our pain.

We are sailing, we are sailing, beyond any
mortal hailing,

Back to angel arms that clasped us long ago,
so long ago.

THE QUEST

WE'VE been searching for a lifetime,
 Everywhere,
For a mystic hidden country passing fair,
Where our bright dream castles stand
In a cloudless summer land
And countless blossoms perfume all the air.

Sometimes when the sun was sinking
 In the west,
And each sleepy bird was brooding on its nest,
We have seen a glory gleaming
Brighter far than earthly seeming,
And we thought to gain our haven and our
 quest.

Music sweet as ever heard from
 Angel choir,
Kindled in the yearning heart supreme desire,
Till the soul in ecstasy
From earth trammels would be free,
Burning in its prison with divinest fire.

We could almost view our wondrous
 Castles white,
With their starry casements glowing all alight,
Hear the bells within the towers
Mark the passing of the hours,
Then — betwixt us fell the blackness of the
 night.

Was it but day's dying embers
 On the sky,
And the moaning winds among the treetops
 high,
Blending woodland whispers low
With the river's rhythmic flow,—
For we're wandering still and searching, you
 and I?

But I'm weary, oh, so weary
 Of the dark!
And upon my spirit pain has left its mark.
In life's game of "give and take"
Oft the stoutest heart will break
If hope lies within the bosom cold and stark!

When across death's black abyss
 Heaven's glory streams,
Lighting up its fearsome depths with golden
 gleams,
Shall we see before us rise,
Silhouetted 'gainst the skies,
The elusive, fairy castles of our dreams?

ASPIRATION

I PINE for fields Elysian, for streams
Sparkling and fair beyond Earth's wildest
dreams,

Upon whose banks I fain would lie at ease,
Mine ears attuned to wondrous melodies;
And lips now sternly locked in silence chill,
With thoughts unchained would make the whole
earth thrill.

My soul is fainting for the viands rare
On which the gods are daily wont to fare;
Some favored eat thereof, nor are denied,
While I, an-hungered, gazing stand outside.

Give me the wine of song, that I may drain
The golden cup and never thirst again;
The food ambrosial let me taste, and feel
Divine afflatus through my senses steal.
Life lacking this is but a beggar's meed;
Granted, a banquet fit for royal need.

If but the lees my portion be designed,
If only crumbs from Zeus' feast I find,
Though Death preside, the gain would still be
mine,
If on Olympian crusts I once might dine.

TO ARCADY

WITH joyous hearts and laughter gay
We wander on the livelong day;
Sometimes the road is fair with flowers,
Sometimes the rain-cloud glooms and lowers,
But we are young, and merrily
We dance along to Arcady.

We lie beside the hedge at night;
Above us stars gleam large and bright.
What matters hunger, rags or cold,
When ours the world to have and hold?
And so, with blithe hearts, merrily
We journey on to Arcady.

Then — blinding tears; yet must we on,
Though strength is spent and bays unwon:
The last rose tint fades from the west;
Pan's pipes are stilled; we fain would rest;
For now we know 'twas fantasy,—
Our dream of youth, our Arcady.

DEPARTED YEARS

RETURN, departed years, return once more;
In happy dreams I see ye still, and hear
The music of your soft-voiced melody.
Its subtle spell pervades the solitude
Of gloomy night until I live again,
But waking weep to find it but a dream.
The golden days of youth come back to me,
Joys long since passed away and hopes grown
cold;
Loved faces, hidden by the flower starred turf,
Smile fondly on me with their old-time charm,
And all my soul is steeped in sweet repose.
O happy dreams, O bitter wakening!
Would I might wake no more, but quiet sleep,
Lulled on the bosom of the happy Past,
Hearing her low voice murmur in my ear,
While memory's bell should ring the Angelus
That tells the sun of life has sunk to rest.

FIELDS OF SLEEP

Know'st thou the wide, mysterious fields of
sleep,

Whose velvet green sward sparkles into rills,
Where fair dream flowers ope on every side,
Their petals written o'er in mystic signs;
Where bright winged fancies float from bloom
to bloom,

Sipping the treasured honey as they fly?
From far-off hills, whereon browse peaceful
flocks,

The plaintive note of shepherd's pipe is
heard,

While sob of waves from unseen mystic shores
Whispers the tired heart to peaceful rest,
And over flower and field and shimmering
stream

Trail silver banners of the fair-faced moon.
O happy kingdom where such joys abide!

O fields divine, strewn o'er with blossoms
rare!

Some time, returning not, we reach thy verge,
And lo, the ocean of eternity!

THE ROCK-A-BY SHIP

THE rock-a-by ship is ready for sea,
Her anchor is weighed and her sails unfurled;

She is only waiting for you and for me

To sail away o'er the edge of the world:
Hark, to the sailors' cheery cry!

(Lullaby, baby, lullaby!)

Who sets sail in the rock-a-by ship?

All aboard! All aboard! Off we sweep!
Over the billows we rise and dip,

Bound for the wondrous ocean of sleep!
Under our keel the foam leaps high.

(Lullaby, darling, lullaby!)

The ocean of sleep lies far away,

With fair dream islands upon its breast,
We tarry awhile, but may not stay

Until we come forever to rest.
See the islands against the sky!

(Lullaby, sweetheart, lullaby!)

Angel children with loving smile

Joyfully crowd the wave-wet strand,
Darlings we cherished on earth a while,

Gathered to welcome the coming band,
Arms outstretch as the ship draws nigh.

(Lullaby, precious, lullaby!)

Song birds wing through the perfumed air,
Flowers bloom that will never die,
For, opening painted petals fair,
Lo, each one soars to the cloudless sky,
A radiant, beautiful butterfly!
(*Lullaby, dearest, lullaby!*)

WHEN PAN PLAYS

THROUGH the fragrant air of springtime
Far a-field steals a refrain,
Waking in the soul a yearning
That is poignant unto pain;
Piercing, silvery and elusive,
As it threads through nature's theme,
And we know beyond a doubting
Pan is playing by the stream.

Pan, the sylvan god alluring,
Crowned with garlands of the vine,
With his magic pipes whose cadence
Is half-human, half-divine,
Binding with his chords melodious
All the flowers in life's scheme
Till the birds go mad with singing,
"Pan is playing by the stream."

Sweet as touch of lips forbidden
Upon lips that fain would kiss,
Rapturous as realization
Of a long-retarded bliss,
Thrilling with the ecstatic anguish
Of love, sovereign, supreme,
Rises the impassioned measure —
Pan is playing by the stream.

As the feeble footsteps falter,
And the glamour dies away,
And the lengthening twilight shadows
Mark the closing of the day,
Faint as memories of Summer
In the Winter's icy dream,
Is the echo of the music
Pan was playing by the stream.

POEMS OF REVERY

A CHRISTMAS TOAST

'Tis Christmas time. Upon the hills afar
In Palestine so many years ago,
The shepherds guarding sheep beheld a star
That led them to a manger cradle low.

'Tis Christmas time. As far as eye can reach
The broad Pacific pulses deep and slow,
And white-winged sea gulls, with their strident
screech,
Dive from the blue above to blue below.

'Tis Christmas time. The tall poinsettias rise
In royal panoply of crimson blooms;
Against the dazzling tint of southern skies,
Cocoas plumosa wave their graceful plumes.

'Tis Christmas time. The snow lies wide and
white
On the Atlantic coast; an icy sheet
Covers the streams, but tapers are alight,
And round the tree move children's dancing
feet.

'Tis Christmas time. For some the world is
young;
Life's bright entrancing tale is still untold;
For some the lights are out; the song is sung;
The shadows gather, and the world is old.

'Tis Christmas time — throughout the southern
lands,
And 'mid the drifting snows, 'tis Christmas
time;
Across the mountain peaks we stretch our
hands,
And clasp and drink to friends in every
clime.

RETROSPECTION

If in the land where loved ones congregate
Is known the misery of those who wait
 Upon the hither side of death's dark stream,
Beset by grisly terrors of life's dream,
 Perchance joy may be marred in those
 bright spheres,
When angel eyes are dimmed by pitying
tears.

THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

WHERE does it lie, this country of our yearning?

Not eastward, where morn's altar fires
gleam

And orisons from happy bird throats stream;

Nor where the palms, amid the desert burning,
dream

Show blessed oases to the traveller turning;

Nor e'en where snowy hands of mountains
seem

To pluck the stars, the while they lonely
dream

In solitude sublime, life's plan discerning.

'Tis here about us where we grope and stray

And wander with unseeing eyes afar,

We brush the fair white wings of angel band,

And never know, until at last some day

We fall on death, whose kindly hands unbar

Our senses locked, and, lo, the promised
land!

THE DULLARD

MASTER, I pray, turn down the lettered page;
 Hopeless the task I find, nor have I guessed
 The hidden meaning of my fruitless quest,
Nor what these mystic symbols would presage;
Let me go hence, my anguish to assuage.

 Time was I conned the script with joyous
 zest,

 Now tear-blind eyes yearn for eternal rest;
Free me, unworthy of my heritage.

Others shall follow, filled with purpose strong,
 To whom will be as naught the grief and pain
That I have suffered; scanning swift along
 The lines, thy message shall not be in vain.
But I, alas, am not of that blessed throng,
 And from thy courts an exile must remain.

REAPERS

A LITTLE time to sow, and then the reaping;
The harvest ours alone, for joy or pain,
We may but gather thistles with wild weeping,
Or pluck from fields aglow with golden grain.

Some work on uplands where the sun is shining;
In valleys some, where grisly shadows lie:
The wherefor is beyond our poor divining,
But we shall learn the secret by and by.

A QUESTION

EACH spirit unaccompanied must tread
The path of life unto the exit gate;
Alone we came, alone our steps are sped
Through storm and sunshine to an unknown
fate.

But when the march is ended and we rest,
With all conjecture banished from the brain,
Will there be found the purpose of our quest,
Solution of life's anguish and its pain?

FOR SUCCESS

“Perhaps it was well to dissemble your love,
But why did you kick me down stairs.”

KEMBLE.

WOULD you know the best way to get into the
swim,

Although it should be on the outermost rim?

Bend your knee to the rich; to the great
lend your ear;

But the plaint of the poor neither notice nor
hear.

Pluck your heart out and throw to the dogs
for their food;

You'll need it no more in a circle so good.

Turn your back on old friends who are
threadbare and torn;

Deny aged parents old-fashioned, toil-worn;
Lie and cheat; lick men's boots, and do all a
fool dares;—

And return undisturbed when they kick you
down stairs.

EXPECTATION

I've had happy dreams of you
Every hour,
Since the moment that I knew,
O my flower!
God would send to me some day,
From his garden far away,
A fair bud to ope and blossom in my bower.

When the sunset glory dies
In the west,
As a bird on swift wings flies
To its nest,
I can see your sinless soul
Fluttering onward to its goal
In the shelter of my heart to lie at rest!

Let your journey here be fleet,
Gift divine!
I would kiss your little feet,
Angel mine!
Feel the touch of helpless hands,
Stronger far than iron bands,
With love's strength around my fingers clasp
and twine.

Come when gates of dawn swing wide
Far above,
Or with shadowy eventide,
Little dove!

From the angels' watchful care,
As an answer to my prayer,
Come whene'er you will, you bring the crown
of love!

THE CARAVELS

In the façade of the Wednesday Club

WHENCE did ye come and whither did ye sail,
O mimic galleons of by-gone days;
From what fair land enshrouded by the haze
Of memory's veil?

Didst carry spices from the Orient fair,
Or gold and jewels from some ravished fane,
Or priestly robes that odors still retain
Of incense rare?

Whose was the hand that steered ye in the path
Beneath the Southern Cross or burning sky;
Who stood at bay to battle and defy
The cyclone's wrath?

The brave who shipped with ye, forgotten, rest
In dreamless slumber countless fathoms deep,
Reposing peacefully as child asleep
On mother's breast.

And those who mourned them, too, have passed
away,
Their bones returned to dust in unknown
graves;
Unheeded, Summer smiles or Winter raves
Above the clay.

O Time, thou monarch, naught thy power bars ;
The great, the small, beneath thy wheels dost
grind,
Grant at the end our record we may find
Beyond the stars.

POEMS OF NATURE

A SLEIGHING SONG

THE white road stretches smooth and wide
Beneath the glittering winter sky;
Fast as the wind, oh, let us fly,
And on its spreading pinions ride.

O bells, sleigh bells, your tinkling notes
Pierce the keen air with wild delight,
And not a sound disturbs the night,
Save that from out your silver throats.

Within the sky the stars are lost,
The timid moon has veiled her face
Behind a cloud of filmy lace,
And all the night is framed in frost.

EVENING

IN silhouette 'gainst the darkening skies
A sentinel tree that sways and sighs;
Across the waves from the moon above
Lies the golden path of the boy god, Love;
A mocking-bird to his mate a-near
Flutes lowly, tenderly, softly clear;
In gathering shadows far below
The tramping feet of the surges go;
And on the horizon dim, remote,
Is drifting seaward an empty boat.

THE NECROMANCER

FROM field and grove the mournful crickets cry,
Through woodland drear the wandering
breezes sigh,
No longer joyous carolling is heard,
But lonely note from some belated bird.

Alas, for flower-crowned Summer, queen no
more;
Her kingdom is usurped, her reign is o'er,
And of her dainty court, or crown, or throne,
Remain, but withered blossoms widely strewn.

A mighty necromancer monarch comes.
He lifts his wand; the forest wide succumbs,
Submissive bending 'neath his fingers chill,
Whose touch transmutes to greater beauty
still.

Orange and crimson, yellow, scarlet, dun,—
A vesture brave the wizard puts upon
The sturdy sentinels, whose serried line
On rugged slopes raise oriflammes divine.

He sweeps his hand across the evening skies:
In dazzling splendor constellations rise;
Orion and the Pleiades burn bright;
The Great Bear's flaming eyes illumine the
night.

When morning dawns again each bush and
briar

Is blossoming with buds of silver fire,
And over earth's fair bosom has been tossed
A gleaming 'broidered mantle of hoar-frost.

HOURS

UPON the rocky peaks the first dim rose
Of dawning opens through a cloudy veil,
And far and wide within night's shadowy close
Bright wings of starry butterflies grow pale.
The sleeping earth, bedewed by misty tears
Of fragrant blooms forsaken by the bees,
Awakes to joy when smiling morn appears
With flower crowned tresses ruffled by the
breeze.

Lulled by the magic of the noontide sway,
Tangled in web of sunshine, the world dreams;
To secret coverts shadows shrink away,
And hushed the murmuring voices of the
streams.
Green glooms, unstirred by song or rustling
wing,
The stately arcades of the forest rise;
And in the mystic blue of space a-swing,
Earth clasped about with golden silence lies.

The crescent moon above in splendor floats,
A shining galleon; on the sea below,
Mirrored, she swings with fleet of starry boats,
Rocked by the pulsing waters to and fro.
The gentle evening breezes lightly sweep
From leafy branches rustling harmonies;

Folded in painted chalices, flowers keep
The secrets of the night with odorous sighs,
And phantom sails slip by and swiftly glide
Adown the bosom of the flowing tide.

THE SURF DOGS

THE surf dogs moan and whine upon the beach,
And stealthily upon their white paws glide
Among the weedy rocks bared by the tide,
To clutch their quarry lying out of reach,
While overhead the seagulls soar and screech.

Over the shining sands they lightly leap,
Upon a wreck they crouch and madly tear,
The while their snarling cries affright the
air;
They toss and surge above a sodden heap
Of that o'er which the women soon will weep.

The Storm King drives them on, his hunting
pack,
Lashing them madly o'er the surging main,
They seize their prey who succor call in vain;
Then with destruction ever in their track,
Unto the sands return demoniac.

THE SEAGULLS

THE seagulls float
Above the ocean till their piercing eyes
Discern below their finny quarry rise
From depths remote.

Motionless, still,
They hang like pictures etched upon the blue,
Then downward from the azure sky shoot
through
With voices shrill.

On outspread wing,
Beating the waves to flashing clouds of spray,
They seize voraciously their fleeing prey
And upward spring.

Upon the rocks,—
The teeth of the inhospitable seas,—
Weary and gorged with capture, perch at ease
The feathered flocks.

INDIAN SUMMER

WHEN cold winds rave and snow wreaths whirl
and dance
Amid the naked branches tossing wild,
Behold, in bright-hued robes, a wandering
child
Speeds swiftly through the woods whose dark
expanse
Is pierced by golden sunlight's quivering lance.
The lonely maid, to dreamful sleep beguiled
By soft caress of summer breezes mild,
Has wakened 'neath November's chilling glance;
Her lovely face, for smiles and laughter
meant,
Now filled with deadly fright of foes un-
seen,
Is backward turned with each quick,
panting breath,
Until the huntsman Winter might relent,
As swift she flies to gain some covert
green,
While he pursues with baying hounds
of death.

PERSEPHONE

THROUGH Winter's stormy prelude softly
creeps

The low, mysterious cadence of the Spring,
And tenderly upon earth's chilly breast
Fall the warm kisses of the genial sun;
The erstwhile nakedness of shrivelled boughs
Is tasselled thickly o'er with buds and blooms,
And fluttering wings of every passing breeze
Scatter broadcast their delicate perfume.
The gladsome birds prepare their little nests,
Voicing meanwhile the joyaunce of the hour;
And Pan, the sylvan god, on river brink
Draws witching music from his magic pipes,
While far afield Strephon and Chloris dance.
The young, the gay, the sorrowful and old,
Yield to the gentle blandishment of her
Who leaves for a short space dark Pluto's
realm:

Too soon the gloomy king will call again
His ravished bride, the fair Persephone.

REGINA

FROM languorous southland, lo, a sovereign
comes

Robed in diaphanous, effulgent clouds,
Crowned by the sun, jewelled by blazing stars,
Upon her swelling breast a silver moon.

O mighty queen, with power invincible,
Thou art the mistress of all magic arts,
Sweeping the chords of passion and of love
That fill the earth with wild, entrancing dreams;
At thy behest from rocky fastness high,
Torrents leap forth with snowy, streaming
locks,

And avalanches thunder down the gorge,
Voicing thy praises while they devastate.
For joy of thee embodied harmonies
Wing through the fragrant air in tuneful flight;
Beneath thy feet the flowers stir and wake
To offer homage with their bud and bloom,
And wandering breezes sob themselves to sleep
Upon the cradle of thy throbbing breast;
Thy dewy mouth is stained by many a kiss
Of days now cold, but with the old-time spell
Invites approach of rosy hours to come,
Fraught with fair mornings and with per-
fumed eves,
With long, still, blossoming days and honey-
bees,

And lilies and a world of golden light.
Oh, veil the splendor of those glorious eyes,
Whose burning gaze beyond the distant peaks
Would seek to lure the tender, unborn hours
From out the womb of time to die at last
Upon the poison of thy fatal lips.
Dost not thy prescient gaze behold thy bier
O'erstrewn with leaves crimsoned by thy life-
blood,
And hear the moaning voices of the wind
Thy dirge intoning as thou movest on,
Imperial, triumphant in thy charms?
Loose not the shining ripples of thy hair
To lie in dalliance by the limpid stream,
For, lo, at heel the savage Winter stalks,
With blasting breath, and knout of ice and
snow,
O'er mountain, over plain, through woodland
fair,
Vengeful and merciless, pursuing thee;
And in a little time, bereft of strength,
With sobbing cries and trailing garments rent,
Forlorn as ever beggar in his rags,
Shalt thou, beneath his scourgings, meet thy
doom.

THE DESERT

As far as eye can reach the desert wide
 Stretches its awful waste of shifting sands
Where thirst and hunger, grisly phantoms,
 bide,
 To seize their quarry with relentless hands.

In scattered clusters thorny cactus grows,
 And wandering coyotes with stealthy tread
Prowl round the hillocks that the simoon throws
 Above the whitened bones of travellers dead.

The mists of morning in a thousand hues
 Across its bosom weave their filmy lace;
The splendor of the moonlit night endues
 With peaceful loveliness its cruel face.

But merciless it sleeps, a spirit fell,
 And dreams and dreams while evermore it
 weaves

In wonderful mirage its magic spell,
 Betraying unto death whoe'er believes.

Yet on those arid breasts oases cling,
 Where by the cooling well palm branches
 wave,

A vernal sanctuary offering
 Amid the desolation of the grave.

O sorceress, what power is thine that lures?
Despite thy terrors and thy scorching breath,
Who know desire thee while time endures,
Though in thy wild embraces there is death.

AT LA JOLLA

STERN and implacable the rocky shore
 Stretches its length,
Upon it mighty surges toss and roar
 In awful strength.

Brown garlands torn from ocean gardens fair,
 Deep 'neath the waves,
Float tangled with bright sea-shells here and
 there,—
 Flowers strewn on graves.

White foaming billows leap into the skies,
 High heaven to gain;
Then impotent fall back with bellowing cries,
 Like beasts on chain.

As far as eye can reach the battle goes
 'Twixt earth and sea,
And in and out the strong tide ebbs and flows
 Eternally.

NEWPORT HARBOR

THE damp winds blow
From fog-banks low
That stretch across the western skies;
Their lips of mist
The waves have kissed,
Responsive but in plaintive sighs.

The once glad sun
His race has run,
Nor casts one farewell look behind
As in the west
He sinks to rest
With vaporous brow and vision blind.

The pallid moon
Lies in a swoon
Upon the tree-crowned heights afar;
And on the rim,
With life-light dim,
Just breathes one flickering little star.

A slow swung bell
Tolls out its knell
From yonder tower tall and white;
But far and wide,
Athwart the tide,
The kindled lantern cheers the night.

BY THE PACIFIC

FROM distant, sunny Orient where
Lie hill-shrines bowered in the trees,
Whence tinkling bells, 'mid blossoms fair,
Send forth their music on the breeze;
From land of the chrysanthemum
The crested billows swiftly come.

They bring the incense odors sweet,
The boom of many a temple gong,
The pattering of sandalled feet
That roam the scented paths along;
They whisper of that land of flowers
Where joy and gladness mark the hours.

On rock-bound coasts, forbidding, bleak,
The once glad waves from that bright zone
Lay on the shore a pallid cheek
And sing in plaintive monotone,
Or lift white hands in mournful cries
Of grief for their lost paradise.

O BIRD, SWIFT FLYING

O BIRD, swift flying
From out the rosy west where light is dying,
Say, dost thou seek amid some leafy screen
Thy little nest all canopied with green?

Then stay thy flight,
For empty hangs thy home; thy mate has
flown
Far, far afield, and thou art here alone,
Bereft to-night.

Last eve while calling
Thy sweet good-night amid the shadows falling,
When save wind-voices from the distant hill
All tired nature rested calm and still,

Thou couldst not know
On surer, swifter wings than thine flew
sorrow,
And thou, poor bird, upon the morrow
Wouldst mourning go.

Then cease thy wailing
And searching vain; thy little wings are failing.
Dear bird, thou seekest but an empty nest;
Oh, come; forget thine anguish on my breast,
Soft rustling thing,
For he who set thy silver tongue a-swinging,
Within the golden bell of Summer ringing,
Bids thee to sing.

THE RETURN

Across the azure deeps the birds are soaring,
Filling the golden day with rapturous notes;
The meadow-lark and mocking-bird are pouring
Ecstatic melody from quivering throats.

Clad in his scarlet mantle captivating,
The cardinal flutes from his green retreat;
Each feathered acolyte is celebrating
A woodland mass with carols clear and sweet.

Cloud-arabesqued and radiant with glory,
Spring fair cathedral arches of the skies;
Below, supreme and grand, with summits hoary,
In solemn pomp the pillared mountains rise.

The heart of nature in its rhythmic beating
Wakens a yearning close akin to pain,
Though o'er the distant hills, with fragrant
greeting,
Behold the flower-crowned Summer comes
again.

POEMS OF SORROW



IN A GARDEN

IN fields of air a golden sickle shows ;
 The last pale rose
Of sunset fire has faded into grey,
 And shadows round me close.

Steal softly, winds, across the moaning sea,
 And bear to me
Some tidings of the loved and lost who now
 Is but a memory.

Planted by Love's own hand the sweet peas
 bloom,
 Veiled in the gloom,
Yet token of their presence still betray
 In delicate perfume.

Their fragrance like a benediction rare
 Pervades the air,
A tender record of life's ended dream,
 Fostered with loving care.

The gentle heart that cherished them of old,
 Pulseless and cold,
Lies on the self-same breast that gives them
 strength
 To quicken and unfold.

Who has not known the mockery of light,
The dreary night
Crowded with fretting memories of joys
Withered by death's cold blight.

We seek with anguished cries, but all in vain,
Surcease from pain;
And then — some morn an angel shows the way,
And Love is found again.

RESIGNATION

THOUGH death divorce us, yet thou shalt be
mine

Sometime, somewhere in happy years to
come;

Wherefore I bid my quivering lips be dumb,
Lest by complaint I question God's design.

Even now I feel thy love of days long past,—
Divine, unselfish from its very birth,
So blessed that it must live beyond the earth
And in heaven's courts perfection reach at last.

I hear thy voice in dreams and, weeping, wake;
But those sweet years of mother love and
care,

The memory of which, anguished, I must
bear,

I would not barter though my heart should
break.

Nor would I call thee back, for thou art blest
Beyond the utmost power of earth to give;
I mourn the lonely years that I must live,
When every hour my loss makes manifest.

Ofttimes I feel if I could break the spell,
Thou wouldst return to me and dry my tears;
The grave is but the portal of the years
Of life eternal wherein thou dost dwell.

O Christ, who rose o'er death triumphantly
And sittest in high heaven, a monarch
crowned,
Comfort and lend thine aid till I have found
Mine own who may return no more to me.

MY PEARL

ONE hour divine,—
For which His gracious name I praise,—
Set in the golden circle of my days,
A pearl was mine.

It was so fair
I scarce could think for me 'twas meant,
That, to me, undeserving, He had sent
A joy so rare.

My gift from Heaven
I guarded jealously until one day
The envious angels sought to wile away
What God had given.

And no alarms
Or bitter tears could aught avail;
They took my treasure, leaving me to wail
With empty arms.

O far-off space,
Wherein my lost one doth abide,
Open but once your starry casements wide,
And show her face.

O Christ, the Son,
By thy fond mother's sacred tears,
Amid the glory of eternal years
Give me one glimpse, but one.

AT NIGHT

O GENTLE Night, whose hand beneficent
Soothes to repose and calm oblivion
The cruel heartaches that attend the day
And with their smart make desolate the hours!
At night we wander through the groves of
sleep,

Where dreams upon the branches nest and sing
Such thrilling songs of joyaunce, hope and love,
That Time and Death stay listening hand in
hand;

Dear old-time faces smile; their lips caress,
The sweet contentment of the might-have-been
We drink in long, deep, satisfying draughts,
And then,—O God, we wake to weep again.

IN HOSPITAL AT MANILA

WE lie outside in the sunshine
On cots and on lounging chairs,
And a few on canes and crutches
Hobble painfully round in pairs.

Many a window is open,
O'er many the shades are drawn;
We know what that means, we cripples
Who lie in the sunshine and yawn.

We struggle to keep up courage
By gossip and jest and chaff,
Though the laughter a joke arouses
Is only the ghost of a laugh.

We talk of battle and skirmish,
But rarely of home and friends,
A fellow has limitations
And knows where his valor ends.

The slender shapes of the palm-trees
Silhouetted against the blue,
And clumps of the Spanish bayonet,
Rise endlessly on our view

Till the glowing tropic landscape
Is torture, and sad eyes search
With a yearning past all telling
For the sight of maple or birch.

Sitting all day in the sunshine,
Helpless and hopeless,— O God!
And the end of living and loving,—
A grave under foreign sod!

HOPE'S MESSENGER

WITHIN my heart I caged a bird,
And listening
With rapture, every hour heard
Its wild notes ring.

Through summer time the music sweet
Rose clear and strong,
Till even Time stayed flying feet
To hear its song.

It warbled of the coming days
Golden, divine,
Of heart's desire and flowery ways
That should be mine.

But autumn winds blew bleak and chill,
And rain fell fast;
The voice grew faint and fainter, till
It ceased at last.

And when the sun shone out once more
And clouds had fled,
Behold, upon its prison floor
The bird lay dead.

MY SONG

I SANG my song along the broad highway,
 With life untried:
Exultantly rang out the roundelay,
 And echoed wide.

I sang my song along the broad highway
 Amid the rain,
And strove with joyous notes the livelong day
 To banish pain.

I sang my song along the broad highway ;—
 The night has come ;
My bleeding feet have wandered far astray,
 And I am dumb.

GOOD-BYE, OLD YEAR

GOOD-BYE, Old Year, the hours are swiftly fly-
ing;

The night has come at last and thou art dying.

Doth no repentance, no remorse assail thee,

As far and wide the wintry winds bewail thee?

Good-bye, good-bye.

Good-bye, Old Year; thou hast been most un-
kindly

To one who welcomed thee so fondly, blindly;

Who gave thee largess as a royal guest;

Whose trust thou didst betray with wild un-
rest.

Good-bye, good-bye.

Good-bye, Old Year who came in clouds of
glory;

Thy breath upon my locks has left them hoary;

Thy lips were chill and filled me with alarms;

My roses faded in thy clasping arms.

Good-bye, good-bye.

Good-bye, Old Year; thy cruel hand, relent-
less,

Robbed memory of joy and made it scentless;

The wine of love poured from a shattered
glass,

In blood-red drops upon a mound of grass.
Good-bye, good-bye.

Good-bye, Old Year. And now, since thou must
leave me,
Wouldst sue for pardon wherein thou didst
grieve me?
Restore sweet trust, make whole the broken
heart,
And from remembrance pluck the poisoned
dart; —
No answer — ruthless Year;
Good-bye, good-bye.

FINIS

THE dance is over, the song is sung.

I've had my ha'pence; what matters more?
We all must live though the heart be wrung
 With its anguish sore.

On sorrowful eyes the world will frown,

For a heavy heart makes a woeful dance,
And a stormy wind shakes the blossoms down
 In this life of chance.

I've had my sunshine, though wan and cold;

I cast a shadow upon the throng.
The day has vanished; its story told.
 Will the night be long?

I've smiled and jested; I now would rest

As once in the happy days gone by,
When safe from harm, on my mother's breast
 I was wont to lie.

The darkness gathers; the mist rolls in;

The dusk is peopled with fancies wild.
Reach, ghostly mother, from shadows thin;
 Take thy weary child.

DREAMS

O HEART, 'tis vain
To seek again
 The sweet rose-gardens of the past.
 Too late, too late,—
 The ivory gate
'Gainst thy return is bolted fast.

And never more
On sea or shore
 That rare, effulgent light shall
 shine
 Whose wondrous rays,
 In by-gone days,
Transfigured all with glow divine.

Though one should rise
With haunting eyes,
 To lure thee with the old-time
 charms,
 'Tis but a dream
 Of joy supreme;
Awake to tears and empty arms.

PASS ON, O DEATH

PASS on, O Death; thy destined road be keep-
ing,

Nor falter in the pathway thou dost tread.
The air is filled with sounds of bitter weeping;
Thy fearsome passage marked by flowers
dead.

The bird-song ceases; winds no more are call-
ing

Amid the rustling leaves their message sweet;
On blighted blooms the butterflies are falling;
All nature cowers 'neath thy passing feet.

Away, away, nor dare molest my treasure,—
The one frail bud unwithered by thy breath;
Let other, richer gardens pay thy measure:
Pass on thy ruthless way, O cruel Death.

TURN DOWN HIS EMPTY GLASS

“Where I made one — turn down an empty glass.”
THE RUBAIYAT.

TURN down his empty glass, but do not let
Thy thoughts of him be filled with wild regret,
Nor for one hour his love of thee forget.

The Master who has wrought us out of clay,
In diverse form has fashioned us each day;
Faultless or flawed, His hand designed always.

Some for His sacred altars are found meet;
Others for royal usage are complete;
And some — lie soiled and broken in the street.

He knows each blemish and each fate has
planned,
For honor this, that in dishonor banned;
The wherefore sometime thou mayst under-
stand.

Inexorable through the changing years
He molds, 'mid prayers of praise, 'mid anguished
tears,
Till at the last is ended strife and fears.

And over all the wonder of the skies
And earth with bud and bloom, though quiet
lies
One smirched and shattered, Fate's stern sacri-
fice.

E'en shouldst thou call, he will not hear, alas,
Nor of the guests that to the banquet pass
Shall he be one.— Turn down his empty glass.

POEMS OF TRAGEDY

ANARCHY

HATCHED in the fetid slums, I stir and wake
'Mid my incestuous brood to seek the light.
From teeming alleys, courts and city streets,
With sibilant hiss I call the unemployed,
The thief, the harlot and the murderer;
From haunts and dens of sin unspeakable,
Through busy market-place I take my way,
Upon my slimy trail my following,
While ruin, devastation, rapine foul,
Its hydra-head rears high above the throng.
We leave upon our track dishonored homes,
Children defiled, and youths degenerate;
The fair, white, virgin bodies of young maids,
In gross embrace deflowered, then trampled
down.

Our battle cry rings through the trembling
world,

“Equality, fraternity for all!”

Is this fraternity, equality?

Tortured and broken from the mills we come,
From awful Stygian darkness of the mines;
Starving and maddened by our impotence,
Monsters that once were brothers, we arise.
What hand has set us free to work our will?
Not God who in His image made us all,
And gave the earth that we might eat and live;
Not God,—but man, exultant in his might,
Obsessed with thirst of power to emulate

Divinity and make all worlds his own.
Man,— the proud conqueror of earth and air,
The lord supreme of nature's mysteries,—
Strides over prostrate bodies of his serfs,
Heedless alike of curses and of prayers;
The strong, the weak, the innocent, the old,
He grinds to indistinguishable pulp
To furnish forth his Bacchanalian feasts,
Till, turned to beasts, raging like beasts they
 rise,
And from their agony, behold *I am*.

SISTERS

YOUR name is Mary, mine is Magdalene;
You tread the road to heaven and I to hell;
But why your life is pure and mine unclean,
The Power that made us both alone can tell.

Our spirits, dwelling in primordial flame,
Together burned in space, nor evil knew,
Until by unknown force we hither came,
And I a garret found,— a palace, you.

The same hot blood flows in the veins of each;
In both, primeval instincts seethe and glow.
Of me they make a sinner beyond reach;
In you they smoulder 'neath convention's
snow.

Your chaste, young breast is not more fair than
this,
A pillow for desire-sated sleep;
My mouth is stained by many a wanton kiss,
While yours its flower-like purity may keep.

O Destiny, thou cruel and unjust,
Why to the helpless issue such decrees,
That yield some lips to love and some to lust;
Give some the wine of life and some the lees?

Within my awful charnel-house in vain
I strive 'gainst fetters of heredity.
Shall I no more my lost estate regain
When fleshly gyves my blighted soul set free?

BETRAYED

How long the time since I have dared to pray
I know not, reckoning by hour or day,
 By months or years;
But I have sought to wash my guilt away
 With contrite tears.

Derided, shamed, I've faced the cold world's
 scorn,
The harlot's name upon my bosom borne,
 By man's decree,
While my betrayer, all his vows forsworn,
 Went scathless, free.

O heart of stone 'gainst which mine own heart
 beat,
O lying lips that, passionate and sweet,
 Betrayed by kiss,
Can e'er be made atonement that is meet
 For sin like this;

Who, pausing for a moment at love's shrine,
Steals from the crystal chalice sacred wine,
 And having drained,
Casts down with ruthless hand the cup divine
 His touch has stained?

When Lucifer in human guise would take
A hand at hazard with a soul for stake,
 The end's the same,
And weaklings, lured by him his dice to shake,
 Must lose the game.

THE WANTON

LIFE met me smiling, with an outstretched hand
That held bright flowers of hope and joy supreme,
And said, "All things are thine, at thy command."

And yet her promise was an empty dream;
Footsore and weary, beggared and a-cold,
I know, O Life, thy lies are manifold.

I drank her draught and pleased through the
land,

In garish day and 'neath the stars' pale gleam;
She lured me on until at last I stand
Naked and shuddering by death's icy stream.
O Life, thou wanton, heartless, strong and bold,
Within thy grasp man's soul a toy dost hold.

RACHEL

THE time is long ago when I and Grief
Struck hands reluctantly on life's highway,
Since then for me has shone no cheering ray,
And of my fond hopes not one tiny leaf
Remains to tell of their fruition brief.

With tear-blind eyes I wander far astray
On hopeless quest that I perchance some day
May overtake relentless Death, the thief,
From whose dread presence, filled with wild
alarms,

I fled on fear-winged feet that summer
tide.

And yet, despite my tears, despite my
pain,

He ravished from my impotent, fond arms
My cherished blossoms,— I no bud could
hide;

Therefore I wander, seeking, but in
vain.

THE JESTER

“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.”

WITH haggard face smeared o’er in red and
white,

Behold the jester leaps upon the stage;
The public greet his entrance with delight,
As by his quips and grins he earns his wage.
Though pain and anguish claim him for their
own,

Though sorrow’s bitter cup his lot to quaff,
His painted lips emit no sigh or moan;
He jests and capers that the world may
laugh.

Wearied at last of heavy-hearted jokes,
They yawn, and he no more their interest
keeps,
His wildest flights nor mirth nor smile pro-
vokes;

They hiss,—behind his paint the jester
weeps.

His little hour has passed and he is done,
The fickle world demands a new surprise,
Another clown their mad applause has won,
And in his garret, starved, the jester dies.

CONDEMNED

WHAT of the night,
O watchman, pacing 'neath the skies?
Above the peaks does dawn arise?
Not yet 'tis light.

The heavens are dark,
The leaden clouds shut out the stars;
They stretch above like prison bars,
So stern and stark.

A dead moon swings.
No light! No light, and we must die!
Yet be the dawn afar or nigh,
Too swift its wings.

When morning fair
Wakes we shall lie stretched stiff and cold,
Our heads low pillowed in the mold,
Our spirits — where?

PAYING THE PIPER

DANCING on in the joyous weather,
Youths and maidens with quip and fling,
Merrily laughing, trip together
To the Piper's music hearkening.

What though feet through the quagmire
wander?

Youth is the time to revel and sing;
Golden, beautiful days to squander,
And follow the Piper, rioting.

Fruit of knowledge is plucked and tasted,
Souls are risked for the savoring;
Roses of joy are culled and wasted,
While after the Piper hastening.

Shadows gather; the winds are wailing;
Phantoms of evil clasp and cling.
Onward still, though the strength be failing,
For the Piper grim is summoning.

Unto the soul despair has spoken;
Courage and hope long since took wing;
Tears are dried, for the heart is broken,—
And now for the Piper's reckoning.

THE LAND OF WOE

FAINT and dim on the horizon,
Amid islands bright and fair,
Lies a land of tears and mourning
Lies a land of wild despair.

The same waves sing on its beaches,
The same heaven o'er it smiles ;
Round it perfumed winds are blowing
As in other happier isles.

Yet it lies accursed and lonely,
And its palm trees in the wind
Sway and whisper, "Ye who come here
Must leave every hope behind."

Island of the broken-hearted,
Where are severed ties of earth,
E'en the angels weep, beholding,
And the devils shriek with mirth.

Ye who pray above your darlings
And their dying forms caress,
Would ye drain the cup of torment
And know utter hopelessness:

Think upon that woeful country
Where the hapless go to die,—
Man abandoned, God forsaken,
Leper island, Molokai!

THE OPEN GATE

THERE is a gate
Narrow and low with lichen overgrown;
Those who would fain pass through approach
 alone,
In royal state.

Black shadows creep
About the portal which is never fast;
Oft with one touch ye enter and at last
 Know why ye weep.

The road thereto
Anon is smooth and fair, then dour and dark,
But at the end there flickers a faint spark
 The gateway through.

None comprehend
This side the secret of the hidden light,
For none return who go beyond the sight,
 Or message send.

How great thy need,
However blighted hope and life may be,
'Tis thine to suffer or the mystery
 To dare and read.

Naught may compel
The awful question or the fiery test,
But all who writhe in agonized unrest
 The cure know well.

Then fear not fate;
When destiny is hopeless, hostage cease
To misery; take thou thine own release,—
Pass through the gate.

VANQUISHED

A CASTLE stood
Upon the borders of a boundless sea ;
An ancient wood
Embowered and concealed it cunningly,
But silvern bells at eventide betrayed
Its presence tunefully.

Eyes starry bright
Gazed through the mullioned windows' ivy
screen

When soft moonlight
On maze of tangled blossoms cast its sheen ;
And nightingales without a thought of fear
Built nests amid the green.

Beyond, afar,
The purple silhouettes of mountains rose ;
The evening star
Above their peaks hung signals of repose ;
And till by dawn dispersed, the fleecy clouds
Flocked round the rocky close.

So sweet Content
With gentle Peace reigned in this fair domain,
And Sorrow went
Aside with shrouded face her path of pain,
And though by Death companioned step by
step,
Sought not ingress to gain.

But chill winds blew,
Snow-laden, till the flowers drooped and died;
The wild birds flew
Affrighted and to southlands swift wings plied;
And Doubt with icy fingers stood without
And would not be denied.

Relentless Fate
Led unveiled Sorrow with her haunted eyes
Through bastioned gate;
Smote down defense 'mid wild despairing cries,
Till Death at last, a conqueror and a king,
Held Life his captive prize.

Now stone by stone,
White, cruel hands of surges seaward sweep
A shattered throne
Whose sovereignty the spirit could not keep;
And o'er the ruins, desolate and stark,
Mildew and darkness creep.

RELIGIOUS POEMS

THE CROSS OF RUBIDOUX

THE golden sunshine gleams o'er mesas wide,
And over giant peaks that on each side

 In might arise,
Invading e'en the kingdom of the skies.

From rocky heights of Rubidoux there falls
The shadow of a Cross that voiceless calls

 Till man must heed
Its message blest, attuned to every need.
On whomso'er its benison doth rest,
Responsive reverence wakens in the breast;

 The present vast
May not eliminate the storied past.

In blush and bloom a golden orchard glows,
And borne on wandering breeze from cloistered
 rows,

 A perfume rare,
Like incense from an altar, fills the air.

Junipero Serra and the fathers sleep;
His Mission, best beloved, a crumbling heap,

 The spoil of Time;
And o'er the ruined walls the roses climb.
Dauntless of heart, they toiled with bitter
 stress

To make a garden of a wilderness;
 From great to least
They ministered, as friend, physician, priest.

And when the dark hour came and strength was
 spent,
Their prayer for human succor impotent,
 They recked not loss,
But martyred, dying, clung unto the Cross.

THE WORSHIP OF THE FLOWERS

O FLOWERS fair, unto the world God-given,
Earth-stars that waken from a dewy sleep
To smile upon thy glittering twins in heaven
That watch and ward in wind-swept spaces
keep:

Thy fragrant chalices are gently swaying
'Mid woodland aisles and on the garden sod,
In perfumed wordless prayers forever saying
Their matins and their vespers unto God.

The little feathered acolytes are singing
In thrilling chorus near each hidden nest,
On bush and shrub are balmy censers swinging
As Nature worships at divine behest.

From bulb and seed in dark mold fructifying,
Ye rise triumphantly as some day we
Shall fall into the sleep that men call dying,
And waken into immortality.

What matter if ye live but for an hour,
Ye did not bloom in vain though ye must
fade;
Ye are the symbol of His love and power,
The sweet sign manual His hand has made.

EASTER TIME

'Tis Easter time: sing, birds, your roundelay;
Sing, all ye little streams along the way.

'Tis Easter time:

O sighing trees, lament no more your shame;
The Cross man hewed from ye did man reclaim.

'Tis Easter time: O sister Magdalene,
This day know that His blood has washed thee
clean.

'Tis Easter time:

He doth upon Himself all burdens take,—
Thy base desires, thine anguish, thy heart-
break.

'Tis Easter time: Mary, no longer weep;
The Christ, thy Son, has wakened from his
sleep.

'Tis Easter time:

O sorrowing mother, ever art thou blest,
That thou hast rocked the Godhead on thy
breast.

'Tis Easter time: our Lord and God has risen;
Sing, contrite hearts, anointed by his chrism.

'Tis Easter time:

Through heaven and earth let the wild anthem
ring,

“Behold, upon His throne, Jehovah, King.”

CHRIST'S MOTHER

HE was a baby cradled in her arms,
Just such an one as we might love to-day,
A little rosy child with dimpled charms,
And Mary strove to keep all ill away.

She bent above Him in ecstatic thought
Like other mothers, be time old or new;
And when His eager lips her bosom sought,
In every sip her very soul He drew.

And then — upon the cross 'twixt felons twain
She saw Him nailed, she heard His last faint
breath,
And suffered with Him every bitter pain,
As impotent she watched His cruel death.

O Mary, who on erring world ingrate
Bestowed such gift, thine only Son divine,
What mortal power can judge or estimate
A sacrifice so infinite as thine!

BETHLEHEM'S BABE

IN Bethlehem a babe was born ;
 (*List the angels calling!*)
A manger was his cradle bed,
And straw the pillow for his head.
 (*Fast the tears are falling.*)

Swift winging through the gates of morn,
 (*List the angels calling!*)
Responsive to his plaintive cry,
Bright seraphs sang his lullaby.
 (*Fast the tears are falling.*)

In adoration knelt the kine ;
 (*List the angels calling!*)
All creatures knew their Lord supreme
Save those blind souls he would redeem.
 (*Fast the tears are falling.*)

O little hands that cling and twine!
 (*List the angels calling!*)
O baby brow whereon we see
The sign and seal of sovereignty!
 (*Fast the tears are falling.*)

The shadow of the cross draws near ;
 (*List the angels calling!*)
The way to Calvary is steep,
Death's murky vapors closer creep.
 (*Fast the tears are falling.*)

Earth, look upon thy work and fear!

(List the angels calling!)

'Twixt felons twain a form doth swing,

And man has slain his God and King!

(Fast the tears are falling.)

Heavens' portals ope, worlds disappear;

(List the anthems pealing!)

The Son of God, man's sacrifice,

Behold, enthroned in paradise!

Archangels round him kneeling!

I AM A WANDERER

I AM a wanderer from my Father's home;
Far, far afield my erring steps have strayed
O'er rugged mountains, height on height arrayed;
Through swamp and thicket dense, my way
have made,
Until at last I can no longer roam.

I am a wanderer from my Father's home;
'Time was, long since, when strong and un-
afraid,
I woke e'er roses of the dawn could fade,
And blithely roamed 'mid glad birds' sere-
nade,
Beneath a smiling heaven's arching dome.

I am a wanderer from my Father's home;
My strength is spent; no more can I per-
suade
My lagging feet through forests' dim arcade.
I fear the haunted gloom and dusky shade
Wherein the gleaming torrents roar and foam.

I am a wanderer from my Father's home;
The shadows lengthen; soon will night in-
vade
My path. Thy hand alone can give me aid;
O walk with me that my weak steps be stayed!
I am a wanderer from my Father's home.

WHEN SHEPHERDS WATCHED

THROUGH that wondrous night the shepherds,
 watching,
Saw strange signs and portents far above them,
While the changeful winds blew hither, thither,
 In a wild unrest.

'Mid the glittering, radiant lamps of heaven,
Now revealed, now screened by misty curtain,
One alone burned brighter than all others,—
 Star of Bethlehem.

Marvelling, the shepherds left, forgotten,
Timid flocks unguarded from night's perils,
Guided by the light until it led them
 To a manger bed.

Quietly the Prince of Peace was lying
In His humble cradle by His mother,
While the sweet-breathed kine about were
 kneeling,
 Worshipping and dumb.

Everywhere unseen were shining legions,
Wings outspread, their Lord and King adoring,
Pouring through the golden gates of heaven
 In an endless throng.

Virgin Mary, chosen among women,
Mother of our God, though great thy glory,
Great thy pain. The cross whereon He suf-
fered,
Thee, too, crucified.

YULETIDE

THE holly blushes 'neath its leaves,
The crackling Yule log blazes clear;
Bedeck the hall with Christmas wreaths,
Fill up the glass with Yuletide cheer.

The wassail bowl is brimming o'er,
And Christmas tapers all alight;
The Christ child waits beside the door
For leave to enter in to-night.

The world without in frosty chains
Lies bound beneath the cold star-glow,
But cheery home-fires through the panes
Throw gleams across the drifting snow.

The bells ring out their clangor sweet,
"Peace upon earth, to man good will!"
Above the tumult of the street
Rise the insistent voices shrill.

Bid sorrow for a time depart,
Forget a while life's discipline,
Ope wide the portals of the heart,
And let the Christmas mummers in.

CUI BONO

WHY must there be,
Dear God, this groping through the mists and
 damps,
Seeing afar the happy household lamps,
But none for me?

Why should I toil
'Mid thorny paths beside the river's brink,
With breaking heart and tired feet that sink
In mud and soil?

Some pathways lie
Sunny and beautiful by tranquil streams,
Some weary eyes close fast in tearless dreams;
Lord, why not I?

May I not rest
One moment upon grassy knoll in shade
Of some old oak where little birds have made
A hidden nest?

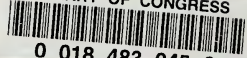
When shadows fall
And pale stars glimmer faintly through the
night,
Strange evil things from thickets dense affright
With wail and call:

Then could I hear
But once Thy voice, 'twould ease my path of
 pain;
Thy presence would my ebbing strength sus-
 tain,
And banish fear.

Ofttimes I seem,
Asleep, to rest within Thy sheltering arms;
At dawn I wake to find with wild alarms
 'Tis but a dream.

Yet shouldst thou still
Decree my spirit's growth by bitter loss,
Grant me the trust to humbly kiss the Cross,
And do Thy will.

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